

TEXAS LEGISLATURE

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KILDEE. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to follow my neighbor and colleague from Texas. I also served in the State House and the State Senate. To compare what is being done by those heroes in Oklahoma now to suicide bombers is outrageous. That is just overboard.

This is why we have the problems we have in Texas right now. They do not recognize the comity that has been traditional in the Texas legislature. We used to never fight over anything in a partisan manner except redistricting and election bills. Now we are going to have election and redistricting bills coming every 2 years because of our colleague, the gentleman from Texas, (Mr. DELAY).

This is unprecedented. In 50 years, no State has ever opened redistricting just for partisan purposes until now in Texas and Colorado. The Texas Attorney General, who is a Republican, issued an opinion within the last month that said, no, the legislature does not have to reopen the redistricting process. So we are having to bring it here to the floor of the House simply because my colleague from Houston, Fort Bend County, brought it to the legislature to eliminate 10 Members from Texas.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLINS). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken up later today.

AMENDING THE RICHARD B. RUSSELL NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH ACT

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 870) to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to extend the availability of funds to carry out the fruit and vegetable pilot program.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 870

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PILOT PROGRAM.

Section 18(g)(4) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769(g)(4)) is amended by inserting before the

period at the end the following: “, to remain available until the close of the school year beginning July 2003”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 870.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 870, a bill to extend the period of time for which participating schools may provide free, fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables to children in schools. This pilot program, which was authorized as part of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, provides fruits and vegetables to children in an effort to increase their consumption of these healthful foods.

I am proud that Ohio was selected to be one of the four States participating in this pilot program and that two of these schools are in Ohio's 8th district, which I represent, Nevin Coppock Elementary School in Tipp City, Ohio, and Stebbins High School in Riverside, Ohio.

On April 10, the other body passed S. 870, which allows additional time for the current funds to be expended. It does not authorize new money to be spent on the pilot. S. 870 enjoyed broad bipartisan support in the other body and is supported in the House on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, a recent evaluation of the fruit and vegetable pilot program by the United States Department of Agriculture says that this pilot was popular amongst parents, teachers, and students, and successfully increased children's interest in making fruits and vegetables a regular part of their diet. Now, this is an encouraging finding at a time when rates of overweight and obesity amongst children are at an all-time high and that these rates are continuing to rise steadily without any sign of a reverse in this troubling trend.

Growing scientific evidence demonstrates a strong link between nutrients found in fruits and vegetables and the reduced risk of several chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and others. According to the Office of the Surgeon General, diet-related diseases cost this country approximately \$117 billion each year, and several other estimates are even larger.

Nutrition experts strongly encourage Americans to consume a variety of

fruits and vegetables on a daily basis, yet data from the national nutrition and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that only one in four Americans, about 24 percent, eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day, and children tend to eat less fruits and vegetables than adults. This evidence makes clear the importance of our efforts to encourage children to develop an interest in fruits and vegetables at a young age.

Today, I am pleased with the strong level of bipartisan support received by this pilot program and urge my colleagues to support S. 870 to extend this pilot into the next year.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 870. This legislation allows us to extend the current fruit and vegetable pilot program enacted under the farm bill for an additional year. Because of the short time frame after enactment of the farm bill, many of the schools were not able to begin their participation in the program as quickly as we had hoped. As a result, many schools will have funds remaining at the end of the school year.

The issue of fruit and vegetable consumption by our children is critically important. Studies continually show that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables at a young age leads to healthier diets in adulthood. Coupled with the alarming rates of childhood obesity, we should be doing all we can to expand fruit and vegetable consumption among our children. Educating our children now about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables will lead to a healthier Nation in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation marks an important step as we begin our discussion to reauthorize our Federal child nutrition programs. As part of reauthorization, it is my hope that we can expand the benefits of this pilot to all our Nation's children. I urge all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, in the world of athletics, each year our young people get bigger, they get stronger, and they get faster. Unfortunately, many of our young people just get bigger. They consume diets that are very high in fat. Sometimes a serving of fruit equals a serving of Fruit Loops and a serving of vegetables equates to French fries or potato chips.

As has been mentioned previously, 60 percent of Americans currently are overweight, 20 percent are obese, and among our young people the percentages are just about the same. An alarming trend has been that we are starting to see atherosclerosis in elementary school children. These are